

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 06572 261910Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 L-03 /056 W
-----061000 270718Z /15
R 261211Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1203

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6572

CALCUTTA 0705 FOLLOWS. SENT TO NEW DELHI FOR ACTION ON 26 APR 78.
BEING RPT FOR YOUR ACT/INFO.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 0705

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF, PINT, IN
SUBJECT: DANDAKARANYA DESERTERS

REF: (A) CALCUTE 0535, (B) CALCUTTA 0610, (C) CALCUTTA 0611

1. IN A FRONT-PAGE ITEM ATTRIBUTED TO A STAFF REPORTER
THE BENGALI LANGUAGE DAILY ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA ON APRIL 25
SAYS THAT THE GOIS BORDER SECURITY FORCE HAS STRENGTHENED
ITS FORCES AND HAS EXTENDED ITS PATROLLING IN THE
SUNDERBANS AREA SO THAT THE REFUGEES FROM DANDAKARANYA
DO NOT CROSS THE FRONTIER TO ENTER BANGLADESH. ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BORDER, THE PAPER REPORTS,
THE BANGLADESH RIFLES HAVE ALSO STRENGTHENED THEIR
PATROLLING IN THE SATKHIRA-JOJODANGA AND BASANTPUR-
HINGALGANJ AREAS TO STOP ANY INFLUX OF REFUGEES INTO
BANGLADESH. ANANDA GOES ON TO SAY THAT SPEEDBOATS OF THE
BANGLADESH RIFLES ARE PATROLLING AT LOCATIONS WHERE THE
INTERNATIONAL BORDER RUNS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER.
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2. WE HEAR THAT WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER JYOTI
BASU IS INTENSELY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE TROUBLESOME
PROBLEM OF THE DANDAKARANYA REFUGEES, WHO CONTINUE TO
SLIP FROM HASANABAD INTO THE SUNDERBANS AREA TO THE
SOUTH, IN SOME CASES STEALING BOATS FROM THE LOCAL
PEOPLE TO DO SO. THE CHIEF MINISTER REPORTEDLY TOLD

JOURNALISTS ON MONDAY THAT 6,000 REFUGEES HAVE GONE TO THE BAGNA FOREST IN THE SUNDERBANS AND HE HAS ALSO ATTRIBUTED TRUCULENT AND PROVOCATIVE BEHAVIOR TO THEM. ALTHOUGH THE CAUSES OF THE HEAVY INFLUX INTO WEST BENGAL OF THE REFUGEES FROM DANDAKARANAYA IN THE LAST WEEKS REMAIN UNCLEAR, WE ARE TOLD THAT THE CHINEF MINISTER ATTRIBUTES SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY TO CONGRESS(I) ELEMENTS AND PRESUMABLY ALSO TO MEMBERS OF THE CPI WORKING ALONG WITH CONGRESS(I). HE BELIEVES THAT THE REFUGEES ARE BEING MANIPULATED IN ORDER TO EMBARRASS HIS GOVERNMENT.

3. EFFORTS BY THE REFUGEES TO CROSS THE INTERNATIONAL FRONTIER, THUS CONVERTING THE PROBLEM INTO A QUESTION BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH, AND ONE WITH COMMUNAL OVERTONES, WOULD BE ONE OF THE WORST TURNS THE SITUATION COULD TAKE, FROM BASU'S POINT OF VIEW, BECAUSE IT WOULD PUT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN A POSITION TO INTERVENE, IMPOSING CENTRAL POLICE AUTHORITY IN PLACE OF STATE POLICE AUTHORITY IN THE AFFECTED AREAS, INDICATING THAT THE MARXIST GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL COULD NOT HANDLE THE SITUATION.

4. ONE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BEEN BLAMED FOR THE INFLUX IS RAM CHATTERJEE, A MINOR PARTY (MARXIST FORWARD BLOC) MEMBER OF THE LEFT FRONT GOWB.
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CHATTERJEE VISITED DANDAKARANYA A MONTH OR SO BEFORE THE REFUGEE INFLUX BEGAN, AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS PROTESTED THAT HE DID NOTHING TO ENCOURAGE THE REFUGEES TO COME TO WEST BENGAL, IT APPEARS THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN PRESENT, AND MADE NO OBJECTION, ON OCCASIONS WHEN OTHER SPEAKERS DID URGE THE REFUGEES TO LEAVE THE RESETTLEMENT AREA AND GO EAST TO BENGAL. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE LEFT FRONT COMMITTEE HAS CENSURED HIM FOR THIS IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR ALTHOUGH THE GOWB, INCLUDING THE CHIEF MINISTER, HAS DEFENDED CHATTERJEE BY SAYING THAT THE PROBLEM COULD NOT BE ATTRIBUTED TO ANY LEFT FRONT MINISTER.
MCCULLOCH

UNQUOTE
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, BORDER CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE06572
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780179-1098
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780415/aaaaameb.tel
Line Count: 110
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 81bd2fa7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 CALCUTTA 535, 78 CALCUTTA 610, 78 CALCUTTA 611
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2843425
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DANDAKARANYA DESERTERS
TAGS: SREF, PINT, PBOR, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/81bd2fa7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014